

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJ: INITIAL REACTIONS TO OUTCOME OF QUITO CONFERENCE

REF: BOGOTA 10012

1. THE FAILURE OF THE QUITO CONFERENCE TO LIFT CUBAN SANCTIONS HAS PROVOKED SHARP DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISSATISFACTION.

2. COLOMBIAN FONMIN LIEVANO AGUIRRE IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FROM QUITO WITH EL TIEMPO SAID "WE LEAVE QUITO FREE OF ALL OUT-WORN OBLIGATIONS". REPLYING TO A QUESTION WHETHER COLOMBIA WOULD NOW RENEW RELATIONS WITH CUBA, LIEVANO SAID, "WE ARE CONSIDERING IT". LIEVANO SAID THE ABSENCE OF THE SECRETARY AT THE CONFERENCE WAS NOT AS GRAVE AS THE ABSENCE OF A US POLICY REGARDING NEW REALITIES IN LATAM AMERICA.

3. DESIGNATE (VICE PRESIDENT) TURBAY DESCRIBED THE RESULT A "HARD BLOW TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM". SENATOR ZEA, PRESIDENT OF THE LIBERAL PARTY DIRECTORATE, OPINED THAT "THOSE WHO ABSTAINED OR VOTED AGAINST HAVE GIVEN THE OAS A COUP DE GRACE". TURBAY AND ZEA ARE BOTH FORMER FONMINS. FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS, A FREQUENT CRITIC OF GOC POLICY, IDENTIFIED HIMSELF COMPLETELY

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WITH THE COLOMBIAN POSITION IN THE OAS AND TERMED THE RESULT

IN QUITO "LAMENTABLE".

4. PERHAPS THE MOST MODERATE REACTION IS CONTAINED IN A LENGTHY SIGNED EDITORIAL TITLED "THE USELESS SANCTIONS" BY LIBERAL EX-PRESIDENT ALBERTO LLERAS IN EL TIEMPO, WHICH SUPPORTS COLOMBIA'S POLICY OF SEEKING REMOVAL OF THE SANCTIONS AND DESCRIBES THEM AS INEFFECTIVE AND UNREALISTIC. LLERAS CAUTIONS, HOWEVER, AGAINST COLOMBIA JOINING "AN IMPETUOUS AND IMPERTIENT CRUSADE" TO BENEFIT CASTRO, AS SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING AT QUITO" AND TERMS AS "UNJUSTIFIABLE" THE "INFLEXIBILITY OF OUR FOREIGN MINISTER OR THE TOO VALID EXPRESSION OF HIS INDIGNATION BECAUSE THE US, BRAZIL, CHILE OR PARAGUAY DID NOT VOTE WITH HIM". LLERAS CLOSED, ADVISING THAT "ANY POSITION WHICH COLOMBIA MIGHT ADOPT AS A REACTION AGAINST THIS INSIGNIFICANT MISFORTUNE SHOULD BE AVOIDED."

5. EL ESPECTADOR, WITH EXCELLENT SOURCES IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES, SAYS THAT THOSE CIRCLES ALREADY TAKE FOR GRANTED THE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND CUBA.

6. REACTION FROM FONOFF OFFICIALS WAS CAUTIOUS, PENDING LIEVANO'S RETURN FROM QUITO. ONE OFFICIAL POINTED OUT TO AN EMBOFF THAT THE INITIAL REACTIONS OF COLOMBIAN POLITICIANS WERE "PERSONAL AND NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY", WHICH WOULD BE DETERMINED BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ AFTER HE CONSULTED WITH THE FONMIN.

7. COMMENT. IN THE WAKE OF THE COLOMBIAN DISAPPOINTMENT AND EMBARRASSMENT OVER THE FAILURE OF THEIR OAS INITIATIVE, COLOMBIAN OPINION LEADERS ARE STRONGLY CRITICIZING OUR VOTE AND PLACING THE PRIMARY BURDEN FOR THE FAILURE ON US. AS MORE SERIOUS AND CONSIDERED ANALYSIS BEGINS TO DEVELOP WE CAN EXPECT MODERATING COMMENTARIES SUCH AS THAT OF ALBERTO LLERAS CITED ABOVE TO EMERGE AND LEND GREATER CLARITY TO THE ISSUE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE MORE SERIOUS ANALYSTS, IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, WILL GRADUALLY COME TO THE PUBLIC REALIZATION THAT THE US IN NO SENSE MISLED THE SPONSOR GOVERNMENTS AND THAT A PORTION OF THE PRIMARY BLAME MUST LIE WITH THOSE WHO RUSHED INTO A CONFERENCE WITHOUT ADEQUATE PREPARATION.

WHITE

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